



Australian Bureau of Statistics

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ABS releases progress report on Census Data Enhancement

An information paper titled **Census Data Enhancement Project: An Update** (cat no. 2062.0), was released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The paper summarises the progress of the Census Data Enhancement since the release of the Statement of Intention, by the Australian Statistician on 18 August 2005.

Census Data Enhancement will involve linking successive census records for a 5% sample of the population in order to try and better understand patterns of change over time.

Records of the sample group will be brought together by matching characteristics which are unchanging over time such as date of birth, gender and place of birth. To protect the confidentiality of individuals, names and addresses will not be used to link records.

"Census Data Enhancement is an attempt to get the best possible value for the Australian people out of the Census effort," said Paul Williams, Head of the Census.

"It will help policy makers and service providers to better understand changes across time and will result in better informed decisions.

"For example, it will help answer questions like: do people who are unemployed stay unemployed over time; and what are the long term education and employment outcomes for children of single parent families?" he said.

The paper also details the privacy protections and security arrangements surrounding the project, such as the destruction of Census forms following processing.

"The ABS has been protecting people's privacy for over 100 years and this is not about to change," said Mr Williams.

"The ABS is legally bound to protect the privacy of individuals and Census Data Enhancement project must comply with the Census and Statistics Act and the Privacy Act. ABS officers could be fined or sent to jail for breaches of this Act."

More information on the Census Data Enhancement project including the Statement of Intention and Privacy Impact Assessment can be found on the ABS web site at www.abs.gov.au

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